

GHOSTS OF SALTMARSH

THE SINISTER SECRET OF SALTMARSH



DM's Resources for Ghosts of Saltmarsh
Chapter 2: The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh

INTRODUCTION

The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh is the first adventure of seven in the *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* campaign book. It features undead horrors, smugglers, pirates (parrots and hooks included!) and an ominous threat of more dangers to come, as the adventurers must fight to unravel a smuggling ring delivering weapons to a clan of lizardfolk!

It's a big adventure, that's meant to take your party from 1st to 3rd level, and could feasibly span 2-5 sessions. It's also a tough adventure, with roots back in AD&D, where an adventurer's life was a frail and precious thing.

In other words – there's plenty to deal with. In this document, we aim to help you, the DM, make *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* a fun and exciting experience for both you and your players. On the following pages you'll find:

- **Bringing the adventure to the Forgotten Realms** while keeping factions, NPCs and plot nearly the same.
- **New adventure hooks** that can help you get the adventure off to a good start.
- **Tips on how to adjust the difficulty** to your party, giving them a better chance of survival and success.
- **Ideas on how to handle Ned Shakeshaft**, the devilish spy who's inserted himself into the Haunted House.
- **DM's Notes for the adventure**, including every area of the Haunted House and the Sea Ghost.
- **Monster Stat Blocks** for every foe in the adventure, arranged for swift and easy use.

RUNNING SSOs

In this section you'll find advice on how to run the Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh. We strongly recommend that you read chapter 1 and 2 of *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* before reading these suggestions. As always, use only what makes sense to you – you know best what works at your table!

IN THE FORGOTTEN REALMS

As it is written in the campaign book, Saltmarsh is a town in the campaign setting Greyhawk, and the factions and people in both the town's description and in the adventure itself are written from this perspective. Which setting you want to use is up to you, but we prefer using Forgotten Realms, the campaign setting for most of the other 5E D&D official books.

We can easily move Saltmarsh to the Mere of Dead Men, halfway between Waterdeep and Neverwinter, as it is suggested on p. 39. A bit more work is needed if we want to keep more of the NPCs and factions described in Chapter 1, so we've written some ideas on how to adapt the factions, the smugglers and the plot to the Forgotten realms.

THE THREE FACTIONS

In 'Politics and Factions' in chapter 1, we're given a description of three powerful factions in Saltmarsh: the Traditionalists, the Loyalists and the Scarlet Brotherhood. These are Greyhawk-specific factions and so are their NPCs. That doesn't mean you have to scrap them entirely, if you want to move the adventure to the Forgotten Realms. Instead, simply make the following small changes:

- **The Traditionalists** remain largely the same: local folk perturbed by interference from powerful outsiders. While most agreed to open up the town to the Lords' Alliance when frost giants were plundering settlements at the coastline, some of the locals (especially the smuggling Gellan Primewater) has since come to regret the decision.

- **The Loyalists** are members of the Lords' Alliance, a faction comprising of several of the north's most powerful towns and cities. After the upheaval of giants a few years back, the locals in Saltmarsh asked for the Alliance's protection, promising in turn to pay the Alliance's taxes and abide by their rules (no smuggling!), as well as allowing Lords' Alliance traders to set up in Saltmarsh. The Alliance sent Eliander Fireborn and a contingent of soldiers to protect the town, and Manistrad Copperlocks to establish a mining operation near the town.
- **The Scarlet Brotherhood** are replaced by the Zhentarim, who are determined to be at the head of the table, as the backwater town of Saltmarsh is transformed into a major trading hub on the Sword Coast. As described in the book, Skerrin Wavechaser has ingratiated himself with the young councilmember Anders Solmor. He is biding his time while the Zhentarim work to play the locals out against the Lords' Alliance, so they can use the confusion to secure a firm grasp on power in the city.

THE SMUGGLERS

As it is suggested on p. 39, you can have the smugglers be from Luskan, a city further to the north, who's run by pirates and (secretly) dark elves. Always looking to cause trouble for the Lords' Alliance, the Luskanites are smuggling weapons to the lizardfolk tribe in the hopes that they'll use them to raze the city of Saltmarsh, before it becomes another prominent trading port beholden to the Lords' Alliance. Even if the lizardfolk aren't successful, the Luskanites will at least have made some coin while destabilizing their rivals.

You don't need to change anything else with the smugglers themselves to effect this change, and you can hint at it by having both Sanbalet and Punketah bear robes or runes on their spellbooks, telling a knowledgeable character (DC 13 Arcana or History) that they were trained at the Hosttower of the Arcane Brotherhood in Luskan.

THE PLOT

When we transfer Saltmarsh and the events of the Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh to the Forgotten Realms, there's a few minor plot points we can alter to make it fit better, while still drawing inspiration from short brief given in the campaign book (p. 28).

First, you can have Anders work as the hook for the adventure, as he hires – manipulated by his Zhentarim handlers – the adventurers to investigate the haunted house. Anders thinks its being used by slavers, while the Zhentarim suspect that Gellan Primewater is running a smuggling operation from the house. The Zhentarim hope the party will find evidence implicating Gellan, escalating tension between the locals and the Lords' Alliance, and perhaps even resulting in Gellan's removal from the council.

Gellan Primewater is indeed involved in the smuggling, but he – truthfully – knows nothing of neither slaves nor weapons. He merely sells brandy and silk to the smugglers, who smuggle it to the Luskan market, so he can circumvent the Lords' Alliance's taxes. The party finds Gellan's 'Primewater'-moniker stamped on the barrels of brandy in the cellar, which they can use as proof of his involvement.

Gellan, when he learns of the party's plans, sends Ned Shakeshaft to hinder their efforts, preferably without hurting them and causing a spectacle. If Ned fails, and the party presents evidence of Gellan's involvement in the smuggling to the council, he'll vehemently deny all accusations, claiming that his wares were obviously stolen. If approached alone, he will offer to buy the brandy and silk back for 200gp, plus another 50gp to secure that the party remains silent about the 'misunderstanding'.

ADDITIONAL HOOKS

The campaign book outlines three hooks to capture the attention of the players and send them towards the Haunted House, where the adventure begins: rumors of great treasure, rumors of treasures of knowledge (and a method of transforming metal to gold), and rumors of evil, meant to inspire goodly characters to cleanse the place. Besides that, it's also assumed that the party might hear about the house while loitering in Saltmarsh, and thus be inspired to check out this supposed haunted house.

These hooks might work – most likely those that appeal to the characters' greed or curiosity – but they're not very strong hooks. They don't necessarily involve your players very much in the story, and players might not even realize, that they're actual hooks. If that happens, you always can use Anders' to hook the party in (as described on p. 28 of *GoS* and on the previous page of this document).

However, if you want a more personal motivation, you can also use one or both of the additional hooks described below.

HEIR TO THE HAUNTED HOUSE

The alchemist that used to live in the house is the uncle (or other relative) of one of the characters. Since he has been missing for decades – and is presumed dead – the house is the character's legal inheritance. Whether the character has always known about their inheritance, have recently learned about it from a dying parent, or stumble upon it some other way, the character is travelling to Saltmarsh with their friends (or hired swords) to claim their property and/or figure out what happened to the alchemist.

This hook gives at least one character a reason to get personally involved in the adventure. Coming into town, they might be disheartened by rumors of hauntings, ask the locals what happened to the old alchemist, and eventually be sent off in direction of the haunted house. This hook makes the reveal of the skeletal alchemist carry more weight, solving the mystery of the haunted house becomes more personal, and, perhaps most importantly, the characters end the adventure with a nice home they can use for their own purposes in a broader campaign.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE

A faction or organization tied to at least one character – or even all of them – have gathered intelligence suggestion and impending threat from the sea, and wants to set up an independent base along the coast to keep an eye on matters. The organization could be a temple tied to one of the players, or a faction such as the Harpers, the Emerald Enclave, the Order of the Gauntlet, or the Lords' Alliance, if you're placing the adventure in the Forgotten Realms. The organization has decided upon an abandoned house near the coastal town of Saltmarsh, which has a nice view of a big stretch of coast. It sends the party to check it out, clear it out of vermin and vagabonds, and purchasing it from the town, if it's suitable.

This hook both vaguely foreshadows the impending Sahuagin invasion – as the factions warns that "we've heard there's trouble brewing deep underneath the waves, but we know not much more" – while also giving the party a clear purpose. You can even combine this hook with the 'Heir to the Haunted House', having members of the organization (which are also be party members) be the ones who sought out the legal owner of the house and told them about their inheritance. Their intent would be to help them secure the house, in return for the right to use or purchase the building – which neatly brings your party together without making them concoct a story about why they're traveling together.

INTRODUCTION TO SALTMARSH

Regardless of the setting you choose, or the hook you're using, you will likely need to introduce Saltmarsh to the characters. Below are some ideas on how to quickly set the stage for the town's competing factions, generalized to fit most settings and hooks.

We're given several ideas on minor events during the descriptions of the factions in chapter 1, some of which we can tie together to quickly get the party up to speed, as they arrive in Saltmarsh. You can choose whatever you want, but in this example it will be an altercation between the Traditionalists and the Loyalists, that makes the main conflict in Saltmarsh immediately apparent to the players, while also introducing them to a few major NPCs.

You've only just entered Saltmarsh, when your attention is drawn to a short, stocky man being pushed out the double-doors of a two-story tavern (3. The Wicker Goat). Landing underneath the tavern's dangling sign – a wicker goat – the small man scrambles to his feet, cursing at the two people in front of him: a tall middle-aged man with a stern face and a red-haired female dwarf, burly arms crossed before her. "Hold your tongue, before you say something that really gets me mad, you old seadog," the tall man says angrily. "You're free to visit if you want an ale that doesn't taste like the piss you serve down at the Net, but I'll not tolerate you stealing away my customers right under my nose, Krebs!"

Wearing an angry shade of red under his thick whiskers, Krebs responds with an accusatory finger: "Bugger you, Lankus, I's just doin' me civic duty by informin' the folks o'er 'ere that there'll be free food and drink at the Empty Net tonight, court'sy of Mr. Primewater. Why, Lady Copperlocks, I thought ye and yers was 'posed to keep order 'round 'ere, but ye're letting this landlubber violate me, while ye imprison honest fishermen just tryin' to earn a living wage!"

The red-haired dwarf holds back Lankus with an outstretched arm, as she says: "We've imprisoned smugglers, not fishermen, although I can imagine how ye'd have a hard time distinguishing between the two, with the clientele you keep. And while it is Councilman Primewater's right to hold a banquet in their 'honor' at yer establishment, it is also Lankus' right to forcefully evict unwanted patrons from his private property. Go about yer business now, Krebs, before I report ye to Captain Eliander for disturbing the peace – and my lunch!"

As the confrontation breaks up, and Krebs – cursing and spitting – starts walking back to his tavern, the characters have a chance to strike up conversation with either of the NPCs and learn more about the tension between the factions. Even if they don't, they've learned about two main taverns – the Wicker Goat and the Empty Net – where they can inquire about the haunted house and begin the adventure in earnest. The specifics – the arrest of the fishermen, the free drinks at the Empty Net, and so on – aren't important, they're just events that helps define the disagreeing factions and their main source of contention. If you're using Anders as the hook, you can even arrive on the scene to calm matters down, before turning to the party with his suspicions about the haunted house.

ADJUSTING THE DIFFICULTY

This adventure hails back to the glory days of AD&D. While a nostalgic and in many ways defining period for Dungeons and Dragons, this was also a very dangerous time to be a player character. This adventure is no exception, with a high likelihood of character fatalities or even a total party kill!

In the first part of the adventure alone (where the characters are supposed to be level 1) there's the potential to encounter (not mentioning the various other hazards): 4 **giant weasels** (1/8 CR), 2 **giant poisonous snakes** (1/4 CR), 3 **swarms of spiders** (1/2 CR), 4 **giant centipedes** (1/4 CR), 6 **stirges** (1/8 CR), **spy** (1 CR), 2 **swarms of rot grubs** (1/2 CR), 6 **reinforced skeletons** (1/4 CR), 1 **skeletal alchemist** (1/2 CR), 2 **hobgoblins** (1/2 CR), 4 **bandits** (1/8 CR), 4 **scouts** (1/2 CR) and **Sanbalet** (1 CR)

If you're looking at that list and thinking that's a little much for a party of 1st-level adventurers to handle in a single day of adventuring, you're probably not wrong. Obviously, the adventure doesn't expect the party to pick a fight with every single creature in the house, but even half these encounters will push a regular party of 1st-level adventurers to their breaking point. Heck, some of the encounters – stirges, robrut swarms, the smugglers – can do it all on their own.

This might not be an issue for you. Maybe your group likes to play oldschool, hardcore D&D, where death is expected and even relished! Or maybe your party is big. However, if neither of those cases apply, you may want take steps to prevent an outright TPK at the first session.

ADJUSTING ENCOUNTERS

Since most of the encounters in the Haunted House are neatly separated, you can easily omit or alter encounters, if you need to. For example, you can – on-the-fly – remove the swarm of spiders in area 8 or halve the number of stirges in the attic. You can even reduce the number of smugglers, change scouts into bandits, or have some of the smugglers be drunk (poisoned) when the party stumbles upon them.

ADJUSTING THE PARTY

Another solution is to simply start the adventure at 2nd level. With nearly twice as many hit points and more features, the characters will likely still be threatened by the denizens of the house, but have a far higher chance of making it out alive. This, of course, means that the party won't gain a level between the first (the Haunted House) and second part of this adventure (the Sea Ghost), but that's perfectly fine.

HANDLING RESTS

Because of the difficulty of the Haunted House, there's a good chance your party will want to rest before they're done clearing it out.

Resting inside the house. A short rest is easily handled – simply allow your players to take it undisturbed, if they need it. If the characters take a long rest within the house, they'll likely be discovered during their rest, especially if one of the *magic mouths* has been triggered. In that case, try to tailor the investigating smugglers to the party's current strength – perhaps sending only a couple of bandits, instead of two scouts plus a bandit, to ambush them. If you're feeling kind, you can also have the party awake refreshed and fully healed to the noise of someone walking around the house, giving them a chance to instead ambush the ambushers.

Leaving to rest. If the party clears out some of the encounters, before leaving the house to rest and heal up, your normal instinct might be to bolster the smugglers' ranks for a more fair fight. In this case, however, it's unlikely to be necessary. If the party has cleared the top floors, but haven't yet delved below, what they find in the cellar should still pose an ample enough challenge for even a fully rested party. It probably means, however, that the smugglers are aware that someone has been there, and makes ready as described in the 'Smugglers on Alert'-section (*GoS* p. 37).

A SNAKE IN THE GRASS

An interesting and fun inclusion to the adventure is the traitorous Ned Shakeshaft, who awaits the party in an upstairs bedroom, bound and gagged. The inclusion of Ned allows you, the DM, to play some tricks on your players, by having him cause accidents and disturb dangerous critters.

There is, however, some unanswered questions about Ned, which we can quickly address.

WHO SENDS NED?

If you're using the factions described in Chapter 1 of *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*, Ned can be a spy for the Scarlet Brotherhood. But if you're not, he's simply send by 'a merchant'. It seems highly likely, however, that the party – upon discovering Ned to be a spy and saboteur – will interrogate him to find his employer.

Who the employer is, is up to you – it's just good to have a name and person ready, perhaps even before the party heads to the Haunted House, so they have a chance to meet the merchant beforehand (making a reveal more interesting). If you don't want to make up an entirely new NPC, Gellan Primewater (*GoS* p. 8) or Winston (*GoS* p. 18) are both good choices for merchants who earn coin selling brandy and silk to the smugglers.

WHY NOT WARN THE SMUGGLERS?

Reading over Ned's role in the adventure, you – and, ultimately, your players – might wonder, why the merchant didn't just warn the smugglers, instead of concocting an elaborate ruse. There's a simple explanation in the original adventure, which is omitted from the remake: the merchant doesn't know where the smugglers hide within the haunted house, and has no means of contacting them directly (the smugglers usually come to the merchant). Thus, having to act quickly, the merchant sent Ned to dissuade the adventurers through other means.

HOW TO USE NED?

The campaign book tells us that Ned plays up the dangers and cause accidents, which is a bit vague. It's good to have planned some accidents in advance, or at least have an idea of what Ned can do to hinder the party. Here are some ideas:

- Ned feigns dizziness and 'accidentally' pushes a character onto the decaying floor in area 14 and 15.
- Ned notices the animal lairs in areas 8, 9, 13, 19 and purposefully disturbs them, even if the party doesn't.
- Ned 'accidentally' pushes characters prone or clings to one in feigned fear (giving them disadvantage on attacks) during combat.
- When a magic mouth is triggered in area 4 or 10, Ned exclaims fearfully: "I recognize that sound! It's a terrible undead creature, much too powerful for the likes of us. We should flee!" and tries to cause dissent if a character wants to push on: "Well, you're brave, aren't you? But are the rest of you willing to to let *this person* lead you into your deaths? Who elected *them* leader anyway?"

DM'S NOTES

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

- The Haunted House has been abandoned since the sinister aged alchemist who used to live there disappeared mysteriously *0 years ago.
- For the last three years, a band of smugglers has used the Haunted House as their base and use *magic mouths* to scare away curious intruders.
- They smuggle silk, brandy, and – more importantly – weapons for a clan of lizardfolk living near Saltmarsh.
- The party can speak with an old poacher who was at the house a few years ago, he says he heard shrieks when going into cellar, he knows where the backdoor is and also saw a well, but greatly exaggerates the danger.
- When the party begins showing interest in the house, a merchant (or the Scarlet Brotherhood) sends a spy, Ned Shakeshaft, to scare the party away.

TOWARDS THE HAUNTED HOUSE

- **DESCRIPTION** – Rocky coast, view of the sea, low clouds, patches of sunlight, stiff wind, briny stink of salt water.
- House is four miles up the coast by an old road.

HOUSE EXTERIOR

- **DESCRIPTION** – 35 feet tall, decrepit house on high ground, crumbled 6 feet stone wall, open metal gate.
- **GARDEN** – Overgrown garden and wooden roof of small well. DC 10 Investigation or Survival discovers something large has burrow under rosebush. A family of four **giant weasels** ambush the characters, trying to grapple the smallest character and take them to their den.
- **WELL** – DC 12 Perception sees mammal remains in grass around well (mice, squirrels etc.). Well 20 ft. deep, still contains clean water, glint of coins in water. Easily climbable, no access to house or caverns, two **giant poisonous snakes** attack characters that enter or stay close to well. 14sp can be found at the bottom of the well.

HOUSE INTERIOR

- **DESCRIPTION** – Dilapidated, damp, moldy, rotten woodwork, cobwebs, dust, rubbish. Plaster on the floor, shattered furniture, fireplaces show no signs of use. Ceilings 10 feet high except for sloping attic.
- **DOORS AND WINDOWS** – 5 feet wide, 7 feet high, wood, closed but unlocked (except area 15), easy to open. Window panes broken, easy to open.
- **ILLUMINATION** – bright during day, attic is dim light.

GROUND FLOOR

1. ENTRANCE HALL

- **DESCRIPTION** – musty, dirty entrance hall. Bare walls, bits of smashed furniture. Staircase on the eastern wall goes to balcony that overlooks the entrance hall, looks safe, although rail is broken in places.
- **TRACKS** – DC 10 Investigation or Survival finds to sets recent humanoid tracks, one heading north (to area 9), one from foot of stairs to the west (to area 4).
- **BALCONY** – section of balcony (shaded area) collapses under creature, DC 12 Dex save or fall 10 feet.

2. LIBRARY

- **DESCRIPTION** – broken bookshelves, pile of books in corner.
- **BOOKS** – covered in cobwebs, vermin droppings, mold, ruined but legible. Most dull, three noteworthy: *The Magical Properties of Gemstones* by the archmage Tenser, *The Magical Properties of Herbs and Flowers* by the archmage Tenser, *The Metaphysics of Mathematics* by the mage Nystul. Inside third is a piece of parchment, ruined by dampness, only two words legible: "beyond skeletons". Books worth 7gp each to the right buyer.

3. STUDY

- **DESCRIPTION** – partially broken writing desk, rotten with three open drawers and a closed central drawer.
- **DRAWER** – DC 10 Thieves' Tools opens, only valueless documents, receipts, etc. DC 14 Investigation reveals secret compartment inside drawer, contains a glass vial with two *potions of healing*.

4. LIVING AREA

- **DESCRIPTION** – Bare room, pile of refuse in south-east corner, door in north wall leads to small patio.
- **SECRET TRAPDOOR** – if following tracks from area 1 that leads up to it, the trapdoor is easily found, otherwise DC 10 Investigation or Survival to find tracks here or DC 15 Investigation to find trapdoor.
- **MAGIC MOUTH** – a *magic mouth* cast by Sanbalet speaks when a creature is within 5 feet of trapdoor, in loud, malevolent voice: "Welcome, fools – welcome to your deaths!" and laughs evilly. DC 12 Wis save or disadvantage on ability checks for 1 hour unless immune to frightened. Can repeat save each 15 min.
- **DEVELOPMENT** – At your discretion, smugglers become aware of intruders when the mouth is triggered.

5. LIVING AREA

- **DESCRIPTION** – bare room, clump of tiny red mushrooms (harmless) growing in a semicircle around the fireplace.
- **SECRET CAVITY** – characters that investigate the fireplace finds a secret cavity inside the chimney has small pouch with two pieces of blue quarts (10 gp each).

6. LIVING AREA

- **DESCRIPTION** – bare room, DC 15 Perception can notice that the floor of room above (area 14) is damp and weak.

7. DINING ROOM

- **DESCRIPTION** – broken long table, broken chair between windows, heap of broken dishes in northwest corner. Nothing of note is here.



8. WITHDRAWING ROOM

- **DESCRIPTION** – two stuffed armchairs, covers and stuffing ruined. Broken table on the floor.
- **SECRET COMPARTMENT** – DC 12 Perception finds hidden compartment in chimney, with wooden box containing 30cp and two pouches of alchemical powders (5 gp each). Going near fireplace disturbs a **swarm of insects (spiders)**.

9. KITCHEN

- **DESCRIPTION** – dirty, damp, patches of mold and cobwebs, iron cooking equipment, chimney, cracked stone sink, closed wooden cupboard. Stairs lead upward from west to east, decayed woodwork, few treads missing.
- **TRACKS** – if following tracks from area 1, they continue to area 10. Can also pick up tracks here with DC 10 Investigation or Survival.
- **GIANT CENTIPEDES** – four **giant centipedes** attack anyone investigating cupboard or sink.

10. SCULLERY

- **DESCRIPTION** – more damp and decayed than other rooms, ruined copper cask under window, small heap of crockery shards beside it, stairs lead down to cellar.
- **TRACKS** – tracks from area 9 lead to stairs, can also be found with DC 10 Investigation or Survival.
- **MAGIC MOUTH** – *magic mouth* cast by Sanbalet screams in torment when a creature treads of stairs first step. DC 12 Wis save or disadvantage on ability checks for 1 hour unless immune to frightened. Can repeat save each 15 min.

UPPER FLOOR

11. MOLDERING BEDROOM

- **DESCRIPTION** – Missing floorboards, scattered rubbish, tall wooden wardrobe opposite fireplace.
- **WARDROBE** – old leather boots, ragged cloak with coiling ivy leaves, appears harmless but inner folds are covered in yellow mold (see *DMG* chapter 5).

12. DECREPIT BEDROOM

- **DESCRIPTION** – rubbish, evidence of rodents, cobwebs, old bed opposite fireplace. Nothing of note here.

13. GUEST BEDROOM

- **DESCRIPTION** – no furniture, scattered rubbish, cobwebs, something glinting in the fireplace.
- **FIREPLACE** – glint comes from crystal bauble (5 sp). DC 10 Investigation sees it could be part of a set of similar crystals that work as counterweights in alchemical work. Two **swarms of insects (spiders)** attack creatures who approach fireplace.

14. CRUMBLING BEDROOM

- **DESCRIPTION** – no furniture, obviously dangerous floor with missing floorboards.
- **TRACKS** – DC 10 Investigation or Survival sees recent tracks leading from door to window and back again.
- **WINDOW** – DC 12 Investigation finds fresh scratches on the sill from lantern, scuffing of dust near window.
- **FLOOR** – If not following the smuggler's tracks, when stepping on shaded area Medium or larger creatures must succeed DC 12 Dex save or fall 10 feet to area 6.



15. NED'S BEDROOM

- **OUTSIDE DOOR** – Door is locked. Key is left outside door DC 10 Perception to spot key, or DC 12 Thieves Tools to open lock.
- **DESCRIPTION** – inside this decayed bedroom is a man, alive, bound and gagged, wearing only undergarments.
- **FLOOR** – When stepping on shaded area Medium or larger creatures must succeed DC 12 Dex save or fall 10 feet to area 6.
- **NED** – Ned's story: traveler from Seaton, entered house to find safe place to sleep while traveling to Saltmarsh to work as adventurer, entered through backdoor, knocked unconscious, has not seen attackers or heard sounds, would like to be released and join characters. Has lump on the back of his head. Ned's goal: causes accidents and plays up dangers to manipulate characters into abandoning the mission. Has *basic poison*, if he can't warn off characters, he attacks them with a poisoned weapon during a fight with other creatures.

16. ALCHEMIST'S BEDROOM

- **DESCRIPTION** – Moldy, rubbish on floor, single mattress, large chest under window. Chest contains only moldy clothes and rotten pages. Nothing of note.

17. BOX ROOM

- **DESCRIPTION** – closed oak chest under window, three broken chairs, two broken buckets, moldy sack, heap of clothing appearing to been placed recently. Chest is empty, sack contains old laundry. Fresh clothes are Ned Shakeshaft's.

18. LANDING

- **DESCRIPTION** – stairs to the ground floor, other stairs to the attic are mostly collapsed, can't be ascended.

19. ATTIC

- **DESCRIPTION** – big hole in the floor, cobwebs, broken furniture, rubbish, several holes in roof (dim light), two sacks in the corner.
- **STIRGES** – six **stirges** attack characters who enter.
- **RUBBISH** – sifting through the rubbish finds porcelain sailor doll with jade eyes (10gp each).

THE CELLAR

20. WINE CELLAR

- **DESCRIPTION** – shoulder-height bottle racks along walls, seems all bottles shattered, two large metal storage bins at foot of stairs, human corpse in plate mail with longsword and shield.
- **TRACKS/SECRET DOOR** – if following tracks, they stop at the secret door at south wall, can also pick up tracks with DC 10 Investigation or Survival. DC 12 Investigation finds door (advantage if following tracks).
- **BOTTLES** – DC 12 Investigation check to spot remaining bottle with unicorn label, DC 10 Investigation knows its worth 50 gp.
- **CORPSE** – dead adventurer, two **swarms of rot grubs** attack anyone who touches body. Has plate mail, longsword, shield, explorer's pack with no food or drink.
- **DEVELOPMENT** – if hearing combat or noise, smuggler in area 21 retreats through secret door.

21. CELLAR

- **DESCRIPTION** – ten crude beds and wooden lockers, long wooden table and stools, dirty dishes on the table, cookstove with cooked meals, large ham hanging near the stove, stairs to trapdoor in the ceiling, two wooden doors to the east.
- **SMUGGLER** – if not alerted, one **bandit** doing dishes, tries to flee when characters appear.
- **AMBUSH** – if on alert, 2 **bandits** and 1 **scout** are here.
- **SECRET DOOR** – DC 12 Investigation to find secret door to caverns behind shelves that slide away.
- **TWO DOORS** – left door unlocked, leads to area 22, other door is barred and has 'DANGER' written on it.
- **TREASURE** – DC 12 Thieves' Tools or Strength (crowbar) to open foot lockers with personal effects and goldpurses with 7gp and 15sp each.

22. SANBALET'S PRIVATE QUARTERS

- **DESCRIPTION** – comfortable bed with wooden locker, small wooden table and three books on a shelf above it, three-branch candlestick with three burning candles, wooden box and bullseye lantern under the table, closed wardrobe.
- **SANBALET** – if not alerted, Sanbalet is here.
- **BOOKS** – 1) illustrated erotic poetry, 2) naval almanac with tide times around Saltmarsh, 3) treatise on the demigod Iuz and its minions (has a sheet of parchment with goblin orders inside), worth 10gp each.
- **SPELLBOOK** – DC 12 Investigation finds hidden compartment under table with Sanbalet's spellbook.
- **BULLSEYE LANTERN** – used to signal *Sea Ghost*, DC 10 Investigation sees it is used infrequently.
- **WOODEN BOX** 12 candles, flint and steel, piece of parchment with Sanbalet's method of communication with *Sea Ghost*.

23. SKELETONS' ROOM

- **DESCRIPTION** – dirty, dingy, dark.
- **SKELETONS** – 6 **reinforced skeletons** attack when characters enter, disadvantage on initiative.
- **SKELETAL ALCHEMIST** – after a few moments, blue light appears at seam of secret door to area 24, **skeletal alchemist** reanimates and comes through:

A hunched corpse wearing a pointed hat and dressed in a robe embroidered with mystic symbols crosses through the hidden door. Thin wisps of beard float from its bony jaw. It

raises a finger, tracing arcane symbols in the air. In a hoarse voice, it speaks: "Secrets found and lost then found again. Your paltry minds cannot fathom..."

- **TREASURE** – alchemist wears *bag of holding* and *cursed luckstone*, each skeleton has rib bone dipped in gold (5gp)

24. LABORATORY

- **DESCRIPTION** – broken glass, earthenware, 3 copper pots, bench on west wall with jars of powders and liquids, and pieces of chemical apparatus. Table on west wall with open book, unlit candlestick, golden skull and other items.
- **BOOK** – 'Ye Secret of Ye Philosopher's Stone' (50gp), can only be understood by specialist, 8 hours and DC 20 (Arcana) to see it contains recipe for making a 'philosopher's stone', that can turn metal into gold.
- **GOLDEN OBJECTS** – human skull (20gp), apple (5gp), rose (5gp), five small discs for weight balance (5gp each).
- **TABLE** – 47gp in small stacks, concealed drawer (no DC listed, but use DC 12 Investigation if you want to) with alchemist's spellbook, containing *dancing lights*, *comprehend languages*, *Tenser's floating disk*, and *shatter*. Chemical apparatus on bench worth 20gp.

THE CAVERNS

25. SLIMY CAVERN

- **GREEN SLIME** – two patches of *green slime* hang halfway between passages, drop on characters who pass below.

26. NATURAL CAVERN

- **SCOUTS** – if not alerted, 3 **scouts** resting here.

27. STORAGE CAVERN

- **DESCRIPTION** – lit by torches, five bolts of cloth to the left, eight small casks in a neat row on the right.
- **SMUGGLERS** – if not alerted, 2 **bandits** and 1 **scout** here. If alerted, **Sanbalet**, a **hobgoblin**, a **scout** and a **bandit** are here. Hobgoblin and bandit goes melee, scout and Sanbalet attack from range.
- **TREASURE** – five bolts of silk (50gp each), eight casks of brandy (10gp each), Saltmarsh merchants know they are stolen. Sanbalet has *pipe of remembrance* and loaded dice (20gp). Hobgoblin has *mariner's armor (scale mail)*.

28. SLOPING PASSAGE

- **DESCRIPTION** – incline, coarse matting on slippery floor.

29. STOCK CAVERN

- **DESCRIPTION** – three bolts of cloth and five small casks.
- **SMUGGLERS** – if not alerted, a **bandit** is here. If alerted, a **hobgoblin** is here.
- **TREASURE** – three bolts of silk (50gp each), eight casks of brandy (10gp each).

30. SEA CAVE

- **DESCRIPTION** – cave open to sea, low-tide so little water in cave, obvious high-water mark three feet above floor, small boat on cave floor, with oars, step-down mast and furled sail, rope tied to boulder.
- **SMUGGLERS** – if not alerted, 2 **hobgoblins** are here.
- **BOAT** – fits eight people, worth around 100gp.

CONCLUSION

- The council rewards the party 200gp for uncovering the smuggling operation, and merchants will pay 200gp for the return of their stolen goods.

THE SEA GHOST

- A few days after clearing the Haunted House, Saltmarsh Town Council summons characters to meeting.
- The council suspects a seagoing vessel belonging to smuggling ring still at large, wants party to apprehend the vessel and end the smuggling. Offers 400gp.
- The council has town guard patrolling coast to spot the ship when it returns.
- The council lends the party small fishing boat plus two guards who can sail the boat, but who won't board the ship with the party.

SIGNALING

- The characters can signal the ship (*GoS p. 50*), if they found the parchment and lantern in area 22.
- **Long-short-short-short:** "Is it safe?" (The ship initiates the exchange with this signal.) **Short-long-short-long:** "Everything safe." (The smugglers respond with this signal.) **Long-long-long:** "Ready to unload; come to the ship." (The ship confirms with this signal.)
- The Sea Ghost drops anchor if it receives any signal, and waits 1 hour if not, repeating signal every 10 minutes.
- The Sea Ghost is used to clumsy signals, but it puts them on alert. If alerted, the pirates are where it is described below. If not alerted, two bandits are in area 1, five bandits are in area 10, and the rest are in their respective quarters.

BOARDING THE SEA GHOST

- Ship is lying broadside to the coastline, starboard side facing landward.
- If the characters approach from starboard side, they are seen when within 20 feet, even if stealthy.
- If the characters approach from the port side, without light and sound, they are not spotted.
- The characters can also approach directly, lie and say they are new recruits (DC 14 Deception).
- DC 14 Athletics to climb the hull without a rope, failure means falling into water.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **DESCRIPTION** - 90 ft. long, beam 26 ft. draft 8 ft., 9ft above waterline to main deck rails, 17 ft. above waterline to forecastle and poop deck. Jolly boat lashed upside down on main deck.
- **DOORS** - 6 ft. high, 4 ft. wide, wooden, closed not locked.
- **CEILINGS** - 8 ft. high, bilge 4 ft. high.

CROW'S NEST

- **DESCRIPTION** - 40 ft. above main deck, access by rope ladder, open platform 10 ft. square, 3 ft. walls.
- **LOOKUT** - one **bandit** here, doesn't spot characters boarding, comes below if characters are detected.

1. MAIN DECK

- **DESCRIPTION** - forward a jolly boat lashed to the deck, aft a hatch goes below and rope to crows nest, mid-deck two humanoids staring toward coast with roll of rope between them, ladders to upper decks, outlines of doors below upper decks.
- **PIRATES** - Bloody Bjorn (**pirate fist mate**) and **bandit** leaning against the rail mid-deck.

2. FORECASTLE

- **DESCRIPTION** - A capstan in the center, an anchor chain running down chain vent to port of the prow, a humanoid standing near.
- **PIRATES** - a **bandit** looking towards shore.

3. POOP DECK

- **DESCRIPTION** - Tiller with a humanoid near, three humanoids by starboard rail.
- **PIRATES** - **bandit** by tiller, Punketah (**pirate deck wizard**), Sigurd "Snake Eyes" (**pirate captain**) and a **bandit**, sending signals with *bullseye lantern* to the coast.

4. GALLEY STORES

- **DESCRIPTION** - sausages, ham, hunk of meat, casks and jars, opening to above three feet above deck.
- **STORES** - salted meat, flour, salt, ale, honey, olive oil.

5. SHIP'S STORES

- **DESCRIPTION** - two coiled lengths of rope and three rolls of sailcloth, large wooden cask, six lengths of wooden planking, on the wall are two metal-headed hammers, two wooden mallets, two saws and an adze, opening to above seven feet above deck.
- **STORES** - ropes 100 ft. long each, copper nails, dry tar.

6. SHIP'S GALLEY

- **DESCRIPTION** - metal stove, kindling, large wood table, table with large drawer, kitchenware, cask of water, wooden cupboard, wooden chair, unlit, hooded lantern. Nothing of significant value is here.

7. LIZARDFOLK QUARTERS

- **DESCRIPTION** - swamp smell, wood table, silver jug of red liquid and three mugs, three chairs, unlit hooded lantern, three hammocks occupied by scaled figures, small chest under first hammock, weapons under each hammock.
- **LIZARDFOLK** - three **lizardfolk** assumes characters are smugglers, asks in draconic and broken common when weapons are delivered to their clan.
- **PSEUDODRAGON** - small **pseudodragon** named Bimz sleeps behind chest, is companion to one of the lizardfolk. If Bimz' master dies, it retreats and fight only if pursued. Bonds with one character, prefers good character that didn't attack it or its master.
- **CHEST** - DC 12 Thieves Tool unlocks, DC 10 Perception to find key under hammock. DC 12 Investigation to find poison needle trap, DC 12 Sleight of Hand to disarm, failure triggers it (automatically hits anyone in front of chest, 1 piercing and 1d4+2 poison damage). Chest contains ten electrum ingots (100 ep each).
- **TREASURE** - Silver jug on table worth 25 gp.

8. PUNKETAH'S QUARTERS

- **DESCRIPTION** - tidy, high quality furnishings, single bunk, polished wood table, silver bowl with fruit, silver carafe with red liquid, silver goblet, two chairs, padded leather chair, chest, polished black boots, unlit hooded lantern.
- **CHEST** - DC 12 Perception finds key in small compartment in one boot, DC 12 Thieves Tools to open chest, DC 12 Investigation to notice poison gas trap, DC 12 Sleight of Hand to disarm trap, triggers on failure (5ft. cloud, DC 12 Con or unconscious for 1d4 minutes). Contains leather purse with 50gp, *gust of wind scroll* and Punketah's spellbook.

9. CAPTAIN'S CABIN

- **DESCRIPTION** – Single bunk, writing desk with drawer on each side and three trays on top, inkpot, two quill pens, small knife and pewter container, chair, chest, leather couch, bearskin rug, large metal chest under couch, unlit hooded lantern.
- **CHEST BY DESK** – unlocked, contains clothing.
- **CHEST UNDER COUCH** – DC 12 Thieves's Tools, DC 12 Investigation to see swinging blade trap, DC 12 Sleight of Hand to disarm without triggering (short scythe blade swings from bottom of chest, creatures within 5 ft., 2d6 slashing damage, DC 13 Dex save halves). Chest contains ten electrum ingots (100 gp each).
- **WRITING DESK** – trays contain bills, receipts, personal letters from three different women in different ports (each think they are Mrs. Sigurd 'Snake Eyes'), and semiliterate documents requesting 'further supply of ironware as per previous consignments and at the agreed terms', signed with a pictograph of a lizard.
- **DESK DRAWERS** – DC 10 Thieves' tools to open (keys in Sigurd's belt pouch). First drawer has two *potions of healing*, dose of *antitoxin* and key for Oceanus' Chains. Second drawer has professional naval and coast maps, plus crude map showing rendezvous point with lizardfolk at small promontory near river in the tidal marshes, 10 miles southwest of Saltmarsh.
- **HATCH** – Bearskin rug covers hatch in floor to area 13.

10. CREW QUARTERS

- **DESCRIPTION** – Foul odor, eight unoccupied hammocks, sea chest under each, two are open containing clothes, wooden table and benches, dirty tin plates and cup in tin bucket, unlit hooded lantern, dirty clothes hanging.
- **SEA CHESTS** – contains clothes and personal effects, interesting objects: greasy playing cards with two aces of spades, two sets of dice (one loaded), book titled *Grog Hovels* describing taverns and inns suitable for pirates.

11. CARGO HOLD

- **DESCRIPTION** – Lit by lantern, stacked bolts of cloth lashed to the deck, small casks lashed to deck.
- **PIRATES** – four **bandits** and Foul Frithoff (**pirate bosun**) taking inventory, talks about their depraved conquests, attacks intruders on sight.
- **CARGO** – 50 bolts of silk (50 gp each), 40 casks of brandy (10 gp each), 40 casks of wine (7 gp each), 1 crate of high-quality mining tools (200 gp).

12. BOSUN'S CABIN

- **DESCRIPTION** – wooden table, pewter flagon, pewter mug, wooden chair, unlit hooded lantern. In the back, cage with sleeping parrot, unoccupied hammock and sea chest.
- **SECRET DOOR** – DC 12 Perception to find secret door to area 14.
- **CUPPA THE PARROT** – wakes, repeats 'pieces of eight!' several times and falls quiet.
- **DEVELOPMENT** – If Oceanus hears characters speak Aquan or Elvish, he shouts to attract attention.
- **SEA CHEST** – unlocked, contains garments concealing locked iron box (DC 10 Thieves' Tools) to open, key is in Foul Frithoff's belt pouch, contains 200 sp and Oceanus' weapons (spear, dagger, ruined crossbow).

13. FIRST MATE'S CABIN

- **DESCRIPTION** – dark blue cloak on door, single bunk with closed sea chest at its foot and brass box under it. Table with two books, wooden chair, unlit hooded lantern, hatch to captain's quarters in ceiling.
- **SECRET DOOR** – DC 12 Perception to find secret door to area 15.
- **BOOKS** – *Principles of Navigation* by Da Korma and *Legal Distinctions in Letters of Marque* by Tazaard, 10 gp each.
- **SEA CHEST** – Garments and boots, old but clean.
- **BRASS BOX** – DC 10 Thieves' Tools top open, key in Bloody Bjorn's belt pouch, 500 sp inside.

14. SECRET PRISON CELL

- **DESCRIPTION** – dark, cramped, slim humanoid figure chained to hull.
- **OCEANUS** – keys to chains are in captain's writing desk, speaks Aquan and Elvish, will join and aid the characters. Member of tribe of Manaana, twenty miles southeast of Saltmarsh. Tribe has noted Sea Ghost's night travels, tribal chief ordered Oceanus to hide on ship and go to its port of origin. Oceanus saw weapons loaded onto ship, but was discovered, knocked out and taken prisoner, awoke later chained to ship's hull. Doesn't know how long, doesn't know about lizardfolk, and doesn't know who weapons are for. Has been brought food by a large bully with hooked hand (the bosun Foul Frithoff).

15. THE SECRET CACHE

- **DESCRIPTION** – cramped, eight oilskin bundles bound with rope)
- **WEAPONS** – the bundles contain 10 morningstars, 10 longswords, 10 shields, 20 javelins, 1 shield with a lizard with forked tongue.

16. BILGE

- **DESCRIPTION** – covered in thick layer of wet sand, one inch of green, greasy water, heaps of trash, scuttling noise, yellow reflection in one of the garbage piles.
- **TREASURE** – 2 gp found in garbage, two **swarms of rot grubs** attack anyone who comes near.

CONCLUSION

- The characters can have learned that the smugglers are bringing weapons to lizardfolk, that the meeting point with the lizardfolk colony is ten miles from Saltmarsh, and that the smuggling appears to have gone on for three months.
- Merchants in Saltmarsh will buy smuggled goods on the ship for 500gp. The stolen wares are hard to sell otherwise.
- The party might receive the ship as a reward, unless it is reclaimed by royal agents (or another authority, at your discretion).

SMUGGLERS

SANBALET

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 27 (6d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +5
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Spellcasting. Sanbalet is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *color spray*, *magic missile*, *silent image*

2nd level (2 slots): *magic mouth*, *scorching ray*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

BANDIT

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

SCOUT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

HOBGOBLIN

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 18
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Goblin
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 ft. of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) slashing damage, or 6 (1d10 + 1) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

SWARMS AND NED

SWARM OF ROT GRUBS

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 8
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	2 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained
Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 6
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* The target is infested by 1d4 rot grubs. At the start of each of the target's turns, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage per rot grub infesting it. Applying fire to the bite wound before the end of the target's next turn deals 1 fire damage to the target and kills these rot grubs. After this time, these rot grubs are too far under the skin to be burned.

If a target infested by rot grubs ends its turn with 0 hit points, it dies as the rot grubs burrow into its heart and kill it. Any effect that cures disease kills all rot grubs infesting the target.

SWARM OF SPIDERS

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 22 (5d8 + 0)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistance bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Spider Climb. The swarm can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the swarm knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The swarm ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

NED (SPY)

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 27 (6d8 + 0)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages any two languages
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Ned can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Ned deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of Ned that isn't incapacitated and Ned doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. Ned makes two melee attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

CRITTERS

GIANT POISONOUS SNAKE

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +2
Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 12
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

GIANT WEASEL

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 9 (2d8 + 0)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The weasel has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

GIANT CENTIPEDE

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 4 (1d6 + 1)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 8
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

STIRGE

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 2 (1d)
Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Blood Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the stirge attaches to the target. While attached, the stirge doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the stirge's turns, the target loses 5 (1d4 + 3) hit points due to blood loss. The stirge can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 10 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the stirge.

REINFORCED SKELETON

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands all languages it spoke in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Reinforced. The first time the reinforced skeleton takes damage from a melee attack, that damage is reduced to half. If the reinforced skeleton is vulnerable to that damage, instead ignore vulnerability for this attack.

Actions

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

SKELETAL ALCHEMIST

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Arcana +4

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Magic Resistance. The skeletal alchemist has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The skeletal alchemist makes two Lob Acid attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Lob Acid. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) acid damage.

PIRATE BOSUN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (studded leather)
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +3
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Cargo Hauler. The bosun has advantage on Strength checks.

Sea Legs. The bosun has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone.

Actions

Light Hammer. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Hook. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13).

PIRATE FIRST MATE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)
Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Athletics +4, Intimidation +3
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Sea Legs. The bosun has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone.

Actions

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands. If the target is a creature, the first mate can choose to deal no damage with the attack to disarm the target. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding on the ground.

PIRATE DECK WIZARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5, Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Sea Legs. The bosun has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone. **Spellcasting.** The deck wizard is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *disguise self, fog cloud, mage armor, witch bolt*

2nd level (3 slots): *gust of wind, Melf's acid arrow, misty step*

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

BANDIT

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

PIRATE CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Flourish. The captain adds its Charisma modifier to the damage roll for its longsword attacks (included in the attack).

Sea Legs. The bosun has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone.

Actions

Multiattack. The captain makes two attacks: one with its hand crossbow and one with its longsword.

Hand Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Reactions

Shape Up, Ye Dog (2/day). Whenever a friendly creature within 30 feet of the captain that can hear it misses with an attack, the captain can yell perilous threats to allow that creature to reroll the attack roll.

SWARM OF ROT GRUBS

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	2 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 6

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* The target is infested by 1d4 rot grubs. At the start of each of the target's turns, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage per rot grub infesting it. Applying fire to the bite wound before the end of the target's next turn deals 1 fire damage to the target and kills these rot grubs. After this time, these rot grubs are too far under the skin to be burned.

If a target infested by rot grubs ends its turn with 0 hit points, it dies as the rot grubs burrow into its heart and kill it. Any effect that cures disease kills all rot grubs infesting the target.

LIZARDFOLK

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +2, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Draconic

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Hold Breath. The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

Actions

Multiattack. The lizardfolk makes two melee attacks, each one with a different weapon.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Heavy Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Spiked Shield. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

OCEANUS

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral good

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +5

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +3

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Aquan, Elvish

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amphibious. Oceanus can breathe air and water.

Friend of the Sea. Using gestures and sounds, Oceanus can communicate simple ideas with any beast that has an innate swimming speed.

Actions

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

PSEUDODRAGON

Tiny dragon, neutral good

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 7 (2d4 + 2)

Speed 15 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Understands Common and Draconic but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Senses. The pseudodragon has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight, hearing, or smell.

Magic Resistance. The pseudodragon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Limited Telepathy. The pseudodragon can magically communicate simple ideas, emotions, and images telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. of it that can understand a language.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target falls unconscious for the same duration, or until it takes damage or another creature uses an action to shake it awake.

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